

**Michigan** Thomas Lerchen, President

Dohn Hoyle, Executive Director

June 2, 2009

Testimony on House Bills 4183 and 4476  
House Committee on Health Policy  
Representative Marc Corriveau, Chairman

Chairman Corriveau and members of the committee - My name is Dohn Hoyle and I serve as the Executive Director of The Arc Michigan, a statewide organization on developmental disabilities. On behalf of our 33 local chapters across the state and our many thousands of members, I am writing to you with our concerns about House Bills 4183 and 4476:

Some 75% of children with developmental disabilities, who we know would benefit from early intervention and insurance coverage for various therapies, would be unaffected by and left out by this legislation.

Over 85% of children with significant or severe disabilities would be unaffected by and left out by this legislation.

More than 93% of children eligible for special education would be unaffected by and left out by this legislation.

It is inconceivable to me that those who represent me in this state would discriminate on behalf of one disability and ignore others. I have a brother-in-law with significant autism, and I would be hard pressed to tell parents whose children had other disabilities that this legislation was warranted only for children with autism.

Children with intellectual or cognitive impairments (formerly called mental retardation) would not be covered by these bills.

Children with cerebral palsy would not be covered.

Children with severe multiple impairments would not be covered.

Children with several emotional disturbances would not be covered.

How do the sponsors of this legislation or its proponents respond to parents of any of these children?

Disability-specific bills are by their nature unfair, discriminatory and elitist. What is called for is comprehensive mental health parity legislation, and The Arc Michigan urges you to devote your energy and wisdom to that end instead of narrow approaches such as the bills before you today.

Thank you for this opportunity.